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VIETNAM AFFAIRS STAFF
O/DCI

Executive Reg

69-54

DATE: 30 Oct 69

TO: The Director

FROM: GACarver, Jr.

SUBJECT: von Hammerstein's Classification

REMARKS:

As you may recall, some time ago you asked a group of us about the origin of the Germanic classification of officers in the four classes divided by relative industry and stupidity. After checking several sources it appeared that the remark was originally made by General von Hammerstein who was Chief of Staff of the German Army in the early 1930's. Hugh Cunningham has recently sent me the attached rendition of the actual words involved which appears in Robert Conquest's book on Stalin.



George A. Carver, Jr.

Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

Attachment

GAC
Thank you
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[In connection with Stalin's 'laziness' or 'indolence' - "which Bukharin impressed on Trotsky as Stalin's 'most striking quality'":]

"One may also be reminded of a remark by a former German Commander-in-Chief, Colonel-General Baron Kurt von Hammerstein-Equord, about his officers: 'I divide my officers into four classes..... The man who is clever and industrious is suited to high staff appointments; use can be made of the man who is stupid and lazy; the man who is clever and lazy is fitted for the highest command, he has the nerve to deal with all situations; but the man who is stupid and industrious is a danger and must be dismissed immediately.'"

- Robert Conquest, The Great Terror: Stalin's Purge of the Thirties (1968), p. 75.